

## Spiritual Depression-Its Causes and Cures

### -A study through D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones sermon series-

#### Chapter 15 - Discipline

We must remember that spiritual depression is a \_\_\_\_\_ struggle for the saints. Being a Christian does not mean that you will always feel great and that your spiritual life will always be soaring.

*“There is a false idea of a Christian held by many as of a man who is always walking on the mountain top, and there are some who think that if one is not always there, one is not a Christian at all. That is a thoroughly unscriptural view to take of the Christian man.”*

Faith alone in Christ alone saves us. The church can never move from that glorious doctrine of justification. However, Christians must also understand that while faith alone saves us, this faith is \_\_\_\_\_ alone but brings with it good works. On top of that we are told in 2 Peter 1:5-7 that we are to add things to our faith. When we do not strive to add to our faith that which the Scriptures command of us the result can be spiritual depression. Many Christians do not have godly discipline marking their lives. This lack of discipline can lead to a person’s faith not being supplemented as Peter here says. There are multiple reasons why discipline is lacking in many Christians, but one has to do with a misunderstanding of the concept of faith.

*“Why are these people lacking in discipline in their lives, why is this slackness, this indolence so apparent in their lives? The first cause seems to be that they have a wrong view of faith...very often there is what we must needs describe as a mystical view of faith.... people do not realize that faith needs to be supplemented...So if you have a problem in your Christian life they say to you: ‘Just look to the Lord, abide in the Lord’. This is a very common error.”*

Probably the most common cause of a lack of discipline in a Christians life has to do with simple laziness. A lack of discipline comes from not being diligent (verse 10). Now Lloyd-Jones does acknowledge here that this laziness can be both natural and \_\_\_\_\_-natural.

*“There is a kind of general indolence or laziness which afflicts us all and is undoubtedly produced by the devil himself. Have we not all noticed that when it comes to things in the spiritual life, we do not seem to have the same zeal and enthusiasm, nor do we apply the same energy as we do with secular calling or vocation, our profession or business, our pleasure, or something we happen to be interested in? Have we not all noticed when we have been working quite well that somehow if we turn for a season of prayer, we suddenly feel tired and fatigued? Is it not curious that we always become tired and sleep when we want to read the Bible?”*

In the realm of a natural lack of diligence we can fall into the trap of procrastination or simple \_\_\_\_\_.

*“Or take it as it assumes the form of procrastination. We desire to read the Bible, we want to study it, we want to read a commentary; but we do not feel like it at the moment, we think it is a bad thing to try to do these things when we do not feel at our best, and we had better put it off until we feel better, there will be a more appropriate opportunity later on.”*

*“There are so many things that distract us...The fact is that every one of us is fighting for his life at the present time, fighting to possess and master and live our own life. All pastors will agree with me when I say that there is nothing that one is being told more frequently today than just this: ‘I do not know what to do, I do not seem to have time to read my Bible and to meditate as I would like’...It simply comes back to this, and there is no need to argue about it-we all have time! If we have time to do these other things, we do have the time, and the whole secret of success in this respect is to take that time and insist that it is given to this matter of the soul instead of these other things.”*

What are the cures to this particular issue? What can be done to grow in this area? First, we must understand that looking at \_\_\_\_\_ examples can be helpful. We should strive to become aware of those in the history of the Church who have gone before us. Examine their lives, see how they lived.

*“I defy you to read the life of any saint that has ever adorned the life of the Church without seeing at once that the greatest characteristic in the life of that saints was discipline and order. Invariably it is the universal characteristic of all the outstanding men and woman of God... 'For he that cometh unto God must believe that He is', says the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews (11:6), yes, and also, 'that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him'.”*

Isn't this whole focus on discipline and diligence in the Christian life the trap of falling back into a \_\_\_\_\_ on works? Is this going back to the theology of the Roman Church?

*“The error of justification by works is in trusting to the discipline of your own soul to save your soul; but the opposite to trusting in your works is not to do nothing, it is to do everything but not to put your trust in any of it. It is not the works that are wrong, it's the faith in your works, trusting in your works. But what a subtle danger this is. It seems to me that one of the chief dangers in Protestantism today...look at the lives of those men and the time they gave to Scripture reading and prayer and various other forms of self-examination and spiritual exercises. They believed in the culture and the discipline of the spiritual life and it was because they did so that God rewarded them by giving them gracious manifestations of Himself...”*

Practically we must start to put more of a \_\_\_\_\_ on being disciplined in the things of the Lord. Make these things the priority in your life.

*“Whatever I may leave undone, I must see to it that this is done...So many people fail and become miserable and depressed simply because they have not taken themselves in hand...If you do not attend to these things in detail I assure you that you will remain a depressed Christian.”*

Peter says we are to \_\_\_\_\_ our faith with virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection, and love. If we do not strive to add these things to our faith we will be “ineffective and unfruitful” in our Christian life.

Lloyd-Jones understands the word “virtue” here to refer to “moral \_\_\_\_\_”. He says, *“In other words, add to your faith moral energy, pull yourself together, don't shuffle through your Christian life, walk through it as you should do with vigor, add to it that kind of strength and power. Do not be a languid Christian who always gives the impression that he or she is on the point of swooning and fainting and might fail at any moment.”*

Knowledge here refers to a growing knowledge of Scripture and \_\_\_\_\_. He writes, *“How essential it is that we should give ourselves to a diligent reading of the Scriptures and of books on the Scriptures and on the doctrines of the faith...the student never becomes proficient in any subject without hard work.”*

Self-control involves the \_\_\_\_\_ person. Again he writes, *“It means you will have to control every single aspect of your life. If may mean you will have to control even your eating and your drinking.”*

Patience involves not \_\_\_\_\_ or giving in to those things that seek to overcome you. Keep on, press on.

Godliness is the maintaining of your \_\_\_\_\_ with God and immediately after this is focusing on the relationship with other believers (brotherly affection and love)

*“Realize further, says the apostle, that if only you do these things you will have great joy and happiness in the present...If we are unhappy and depressed Christians it is more than likely that it is due to the lack of discipline.”*